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*FROM YOUR PASTOR*

BX 2350  
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1903

By transfer

WHITE HOUSE

**IMPRIMATUR**

†HERMAN J. ALERDING,  
BISHOP OF FT. WAYNE.



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## Contents.

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	5
OUR CALLING . . . . .	7
WHAT YOUR CHURCH IS TO YOU . . . . .	13
WHO THE LOSER . . . . .	16
CHURCH SUPPORT . . . . .	19
UNITY AND PEACE NECESSARY IN THE PARISH . . . . .	24
THE PAROCHIAL SCHOOL . . . . .	27
MIXED MARRIAGES . . . . .	38
THE CATHOLIC MARRIAGE . . . . .	45
TO THE NON-CATHOLIC IN A MIXED MARRIAGE . . . . .	50
TO THE FALLEN-AWAY CATHOLIC . . . . .	63
SECRET SOCIETIES . . . . .	64
SUNDAY OBSERVANCE . . . . .	69
APOTHEGMS . . . . .	78

**8th Edition**

## Introduction.

Every pastor realizes how difficult it is to make his people real spiritual. Not only is the spirit of the world, in which they live, at enmity with God, but so much of their time and attention must be devoted to material things. Then the bad example and other evil influences surrounding them act powerfully toward extinguishing the principles on which a good Catholic life must be based.

But no matter what care and labor it might entail, interest in God and His Church *must* be kept up; the eternal truths *must* guide the lives of people; Catholic principles *must* be upheld.

So when a pastor finds many of his flock growing tepid, he has resort to *missions* or *retreats* as means to reawaken their faith and to revive in them a thorough Catholic spirit.

But there should be in *every family* a book inculcating the *same lessons* and *principles* that are preached

at missions, in order that there might be a frequent reminder to the members of the family of promises made and resolutions taken.

Such is the purpose of this brochure. It is intended to be a "*missionary in the family*," containing an appeal both to practical and careless Catholics, as well as to the non-Catholic who may be connected in some manner with Catholic families.

This fact of so few pages covering so wide and important a field makes this booklet in great demand with pastors for distribution among the members of their flocks.

JNO. F. NOLL,  
New Haven, Ind.



## Our Calling.

### I.

*“Brethren, labor the more, that by good works you may make sure your calling and election.”—2 Peter, I, 10.*

These words of St. Peter afford great consolation, but at the same time contain a warning. He tells us that we *can make sure* our election to the heavenly honors and treasures for which we are candidates—but he reminds us that it requires hard work—“labor the more.”

You have often observed how the candidate for a *political* office works for *his election*. He loses no time, spares no labor, whereby he might make better his prospects. He studies how to gain influence here, how to remove obstacles there; he consults with his friends; his first thoughts in the morning and his last thoughts at night are about ‘his chances.’ Yet after all his arduous work, after time carefully employed, and perhaps money profusely spent, he may not attain his heart’s desire.

Such is a sample of the daily strife which worldly men make for worldly honors and worldly goods—and from it we should learn an important and wholesome lesson. If men can be so attracted by the uncertain, empty, passing honors and goods of this world; if they can set their whole hearts and souls on the attainment of such shadows, how irresistably ought we be impelled to “labor the more” for the high honors and priceless eternal treasures that “God hath prepared for those who love Him?” A superficial glance at the conduct of the generality of people makes it plain that very few are working half as hard to become chosen ones for Heaven as men work for an office here on earth; and therefore the truth of Christ’s words uttered on two occasions, becomes reasonable—namely, that of all called “only few are chosen;” and the truth of St. Paul’s words, which tell us that by no means do all who enter the race win the heavenly prize.

From the enthusiasm he displays and from the earnestness of his efforts to be elected we say that the political candidate *runs* for an office. St. Paul uses the same figure of speech to express how deeply

interested we should be in the great affair of our salvation; he says we must *run* and run hard for the heavenly prize; "so run that you may obtain." Then, in order that *no one* might be *too* confident of success, this great apostle, though called a 'vessel of election' tells us how he himself runs lest even he might not win. "I run," he says, "not as at an uncertainty; I chastise my body and keep it under subjection." Do you do this much? If all people kept their bodies under subjection, their chances for Heaven would be good. "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak;" you resolve to pray,—your body protests; you conclude to fast, your body objects,—it is your body that wants sinful pleasure, that wants more liquor than it should have; yet do most people chastise their bodies? Are they not rather *good* to their bodies? Such will not win.

No,—considering that Heaven is the greatest gift in the power of God, Who can give anything,—it is *worth* our greatest efforts. If every moment of our lives, if our every act, our every word were devoted to its attainment, we would be getting Heaven very cheap. Now since daily experience proves that most

people are not doing much to make sure their election, the conclusion to be drawn is what Christ Himself has told us, namely—that “few will be chosen.”

## II.

Here is the case then: I am a candidate for Heaven. I *can* become one of the chosen ones, but unless I take more interest in the work, unless I do more for God and for my soul than the generality of people, I shall not win.

Seeing such poor example on all sides, even we Catholics lose sight of a great truth, which ought always to be uppermost in our minds. It is this: the years we live here are given us for no other purpose than to prepare for ourselves a happy life with God after death.

This being true, let us make a few reflections. How many years have you lived? If your chances to become a chosen one were to depend on the years you *have* lived, do you think you would win? Have you not lost and misused lots of precious time, many golden opportunities, put many obstacles in your own way? And how many years will still be given you

to make certain your election? This may be your last. During the past year the chance expired for over 31,000,000 of those called to heavenly honors. How many of them became "chosen ones?" Ah; be wise in time. Enter the race in earnest *today*; "so run that you may obtain," *labor the more* that by *good works*, you may *make sure your calling and election*." To win, you must be on the "narrow way;" you must run perseveringly; you must win by good works; by sound faith, only after many tribulations, by chastising your body.

Who are sure *not* to win? St. Paul mentions some. He says Heaven is not for the adulterer, not for the fornicator, not for the unjust, not for the curser; not for the drunkard. It is just as surely not for the Sunday Mass-misser, not for the Friday meat-eater, in general, not for any one who refuses to comply with God's requirements.

### III.

It is true that "God wills all men to be saved." Bethlehem, Gethsemane, the Cross, Calvary make this truth plain. As far as God is concerned, He has

mapped out the way whereby people may "make sure their election." He offers all the help they need, but he has made Heaven depend largely on their own will. If they lose; it is because they are unwilling to comply with *His* will. His will might be expressed thus: "Keep My commandments and be a faithful member of My Church."

We hear many say, "I believe that if one does what is right, he will be saved." This is true, but the trouble is, a person is not doing what is right, unless he does what God wants him to do, and God wants him to be a member of His Church and live up to it. This is the only way to Heaven for anyone who knows where the true Church is; this is the only way for a Catholic to "make sure his election."

## What Your Church Is.

### I.

If your only purpose on earth be to save your soul, if that be the one thing necessary, then the dearest object to you on earth should be that which *helps you* to save your soul; and that is the Church. God arranged it so. Did you properly realize this the privilege of belonging to the Church would be your greatest boast; you would not exchange this boon for the wealth of our millionaires, for the honors of the world's rulers. The Catholic knows the sure way to make certain his election and in the Church has so many God-given helps to make easy the winning.

Would that Catholics realized what their Church is to them! Would that they realized that as the true faith is the greatest gift God has bestowed upon them, so the loss of the true faith would be the greatest punishment which God could send them! If this were realized there would be no such person as the fallen-away Catholic. But how common are such

apostates! People relinquish the Church on the least pretext. They have trouble with the priest; they dislike some action of the priest, and quit the Church. How foolish! Did not Christ foretell that scandals would arise in His Church, yet warn the people to be steadfast in spite of scandal? At any rate, it is not proper to mistake the Church for the scandal-giver and blame God's Church for the scandal. No priest or bishop is the Catholic Church.

The Catholic Church is God's own institution to continue Christ's work on earth, to apply to you the fruits of your costly redemption, to take away your sins, to instruct you in God's truth, to assist you on to Heaven; and in so far the Church is faultless, without a spot or wrinkle; as such she is Christ's holy spouse, which He loved so tenderly as to die for. As such the Church should be viewed, and when you quit the Church for any reason, you part company with your truest benefactor; you take a step that will bring disaster upon your soul.

In her *members*, whether rulers or subjects, the Church is human, very human, sinful; in fact her great work is to deal with the sinner. Her clergy



are for the most part devoted, faithful, pious, God-fearing,—leaning on God as the only object worthy of their love,—but being human they may occasionally make mistakes. Didn't Christ prepare you sufficiently for this view of things when He allowed two of his first clergy, who had been prepared for the priesthood by Himself—to make serious mistakes?

## Who the Loser?

### I

No, my friend, do not try to excuse yourself for not practising your religion, for you yourself, and *only you* are the loser. When you quit the Church *for any reason*, you are hurting yourself immensely, and hurting others by your bad example, but are not hurting the Church. If you mean it as revenge, you are taking revenge not against the priest, bishop or people, but against God Himself; for it is He Who requires you to live up to the Church: "He that despiseth you (*the Church*) despiseth Me," are the words of God Himself.

Let everyone assure himself, that though his parish, if small, might miss him a little financially—the Catholic Church can do without him and a few millions of others and be the grandest institution on earth still. She has done it. When Henry VIII. of England threatened to leave the Church and take millions with him should the Pope not grant him a divorce, the Pope answered: "*For your own sakes*"

I hope you will not leave the Church—but if you do, the Church will live on without you.”

Remember that the Church cannot dispense with any of God's own laws or requirements; if people will not comply with them, they must stand the consequences. As God does *not need* you in Heaven, neither does the Church on earth. But since *you do* need Heaven, if you consult your best interests, so do you need the Church—as she is the *way* to Heaven. Satisfy yourself that you cannot get along without the Church.

## II

Did you ever consider the *Responsibility* one incurs who leaves the Church? The faith has probably existed among your ancestors for centuries. Would you let it stop with you? Would you deprive your descendants of it? If you live a good Catholic and raise your children good Catholics in a few centuries there may be thousands belonging to God's Church because you were a good member. But leave the Church and in a few centuries there will be thousands of unbelievers who might be Catholics had you

remained faithful to the Church. Do you see the responsibility? I repeat again: no reason in the world is sufficient to justify one in relinquishing the true Church.

## Church Support.

### I

Though the Church is all and more to you than described in the preceding chapter, yet in *her external* make-up, she is an *organization*, a *society*, composed of rulers and subjects just as the State. As the State *should* work, the Church *does* work for the common good of the people, and hence, like the State, she must be *supported* by the people. The Church is so much more deserving of support than the State, as the Church is higher than the State, as the good she does is greater than that done by the State. Yet, oh, inconsistency! (surely the devil is to blame for it), people find no fault whatever when the State asks for some of their earnings, but let the Church, and what fault-finding! The State *levies* taxes according to the amount of one's possessions—so much on \$100.00 and the people pay it. If they do not pay it the authorities sell them out. But in many congregations each person would like to be legislator—to determine what should be the amount of tax or pew rent.

In most countries the tax for the Church is levied as the tax for the State, and the people pay heavily toward the Church, though you may imagine they pay nothing. It is true that the government pays for the support of the Church, but are not the people taxed heavier for the government on that account?

Some people imagine that because the Church is not *of earth*, because her work is of the spiritual, charitable order, she ought to get along without money. Would that she could! She is not *of earth*, but she is *on earth*, and who or what can get along *on earth* without money? God Himself realized this for

## II

He gave the first law regarding taxation for the Church, and He levied a *heavy* tax—one-tenth of all one's earnings. Listen to God's own words:

1. "I have given to the sons of Levi (priests) all the tithes (one-tenth) of Israel for a possession, for the ministry wherewith they serve Me in the tabernacle"—Numb. xviii, 21, and again:

2. "All things, which you shall offer of the *tithes*

and shall separate for the gifts of the Lord, shall be the *best and choicest* things.”—Numb. xviii, 29.

3. “*Everyone* shall offer according to what he hath.”—Deut. xvi, 17.

4. “*No one* shall appear with his hands empty before the Lord.”—Deut. xvi, 16.

5. “Give unto the Most-High, according to what He hath given to thee.”—Eccus. xxxv, 12.

6. “Honor the Lord with thy substance, and give Him of the first of all thy fruits.”—Prov. iii, 9.

Look over these texts again and note how general their application is, ‘*all* the tithes,’ ‘*every one* shall offer,’ ‘*no one* shall refuse.’ People who would be insulted if others paid their grocery or butcher bill, are perfectly willing to let others pay for their place in church. The “Literary Digest” of Jan. 17, 1903, quotes statistics showing that Catholics, considering their large number, contribute less than Protestants toward church support. Hence complaint from Catholics is unreasonable when we reflect how much more they get from their Church than Protestant churches can give.

## III.

Besides being *commanded* by God to give one-tenth of all their earnings, we read in Exod xxxv. 29: "*All the children of Israel dedicated voluntary offerings to the Lord.*" And again in 1 Paral. xxix. 9: "*And the people rejoiced when they promised their offerings willingly, because they offered them to the Lord with all their heart.*" God loveth a *cheerful* giver," says St. Paul.

Religion demands sacrifice, and people who are not willing to do much for the Church certainly do not prize very highly the benefits they derive from the Church. To do good is all that we are let live for, and surely one can do no greater good and enjoy no greater honor than to help build and maintain temples wherein alone God is properly honored. Do away with Catholic churches and I think God would hurriedly do away with the world.

But to sift things down to a finer point, how much do you really give to your church?—you who think church dues are too high? Thirty to forty dollars a year? That appears to be a big amount, but it is



*about ten cents a day.* Do you smoke? The price of one good cigar laid aside every day, would pay your church dues. Do you drink? The price of one bottle of beer put aside every day would pay your church dues. Do you go to the theatre occasionally, to other amusements? What you give thus for pleasure, for a pastime, would pay your church dues. The butter you put on your bread would about pay them, and yet you grumble over the amount,—though we have seen that nothing on earth is so useful and necessary to us as the Church is.

My dear friend, by your little outlay you make it possible for the truth of God to be preached in your locality, for Christ to dwell in your midst as truly as He dwells in Heaven; you draw upon yourself God's blessings, receive His graces, which are worth more than all the world. You are assisted on to Heaven. Do you get your \$40 worth? You could never give as much to the Church as you receive from her. God assures us that He will not allow Himself to be outdone in generosity; but remember, "He who soweth sparingly, will also reap sparingly."

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## Unity and Peace Necessary in the Parish.

### I.

If God be so interested in His Church, as He assures us He is, then there is nothing grander on earth (in His eyes) than a congregation, whose members work in *unity* and harmony for His greater honor and glory, and surely nothing more displeasing to Him than opposition between priest and people or a want of harmony otherwise. St. Paul tells us that "God is not the God of dissension, but of peace" and gives this warning: "Be careful to keep the unity of spirit in the bond of peace." Christ pronounces a blessing on the peace-maker and consequently a curse on the peace-breaker: "Blessed are the peace-makers for they shall be called the children of God." Yet in almost every congregation, we find the discontented parishioner; some who are chronic fault-finders. This should not be. There will always be diversity of opinion among parishioners about important measures; but as each cannot have his own way, let all abide by the judgment of the pastor or that of the majority.

You must consider God's Providence. He often permits things to occur in a parish which are not pleasant, but He wants to try the people's faith and their love of Him. We show our love for God when we are willing to put up with hard and disagreeable things for His sake. There are two sides to every question. You may have lots of fault to find with the priest or with other people in the parish, but don't "take it out on God," for He certainly finds more reasons to complain about your behavior towards Him. Remember, above all, that no priest is the Catholic Church, and you go to church not for the priest's sake, but to give worship to God and to do good for your own souls.

## II.

The Catholic Church today is the same in make-up as it was during the days of the Apostles; so the words addressed by St. Paul to the congregations he organized, will apply most fittingly to the people of every parish, and show at the same time how much he prized unity and harmony among the parishioners:

1. "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same

thing and *that there be no schisms among you.*"—1. Cor. I. 10.

2. "Fulfill ye my joy, that you be *of one mind*, having the *same* charity, being of *one accord*, agreeing in sentiment."—Philip II. 2.

3. "Be *ye of one mind* in the Lord."—Philip, I. 2.

4. "Stand fast in *one* spirit, with *one mind laboring together*, for the faith of the gospel."—Philip I. 27.

And his prayer for a parish was:

5. "Now the God of patience and of comfort grant you to be *of one mind*, one towards another according to Jesus Christ, that with *one mind and one mouth*, you may glorify God."—Rom. xv 5.

How well does this sound?:

6. "All the multitude of believers had but *one heart and one soul.*"—Acts iv, 12; but how terrible this from St. Paul:

7. "Now I beseech you, brethren, to *mark* them who make dissensions and *avoid* them."—Rom. xvi 17.

In all his utterances St. Paul was inspired by God, so his words show how God Himself must love and bless a peaceable congregation, but how He must abhor and keep His blessings from a disunited parish.

## The Parochial School.

It would take up too much space to enlarge on all the reasons why Catholics are asked to make such sacrifices for the education of their children. I shall make only a few reflections, but to the man or woman who is *able and willing* to think, these reflections will be irrefragable arguments. I shall first state *what* education is; then ascertain whether the *public schools* really *educate*; whereupon it will be proper to decide whether the *parochial school* does. What is education?

### I.

All Christians will admit that every child is born to live *two* lives—a *short* one in *society here* and an *eternal* one with God *hereafter*. They will admit, moreover, that the child comes into the world under the greatest disadvantages as to both. Therefore it must be *fitted* for both; it must be *so* reared that it will become a *good, useful citizen* on earth and a *saint* in Heaven. This is the child's destiny; *fitting it for this* is *Education*. The child must be instructed in *secular knowledge*

that it might not be at a disadvantage here below, and it must be taught about God, about its duties toward God, about the eternal truths before it can appreciate its heavenly calling. Is not this plain?

But *even now*, the child is only *partly* educated. Instruct the child in every branch of secular knowledge and you have no grounds for believing that it will make a *good* citizen; and instruct it fully about God and all the truths of faith and you have no assurance that it will attain Heaven.

What is wanting? The moral side of the child's nature needs education also. Secular and religious knowledge instruct the mind; but that the child might become a good, honest citizen in society, and that it might love and serve the God Whom it has been taught about, that it might 'live by faith,' it must have its *heart and conscience* educated. Briefly then *Education* consists in developing all the powers of the child's being—the heart, the mind, the conscience.

## II.

Now do the *public schools* do all this? You know better. They leave the *moral* side of the child en-

tirely untouched, and do not fit the child even for *this* life. Their failure in this respect is becoming so plain, that even prejudiced eyes are noticing it. Public school *champions* are today reluctantly making the humiliating concession that *their* method is a failure, that something must be done. Protestant ministers who have been wont to accuse the Catholic Church of being opposed to education are 'taking it back' and saying "you have the right way."

Reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic, and the rest, without religion, are making *sharp* men, *clever* men, men who know how to get at the green side of you, such men as our penitentiaries are full of. But reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic, etc. etc., are not going to make men honest, pure, law-respecting and God-fearing; they will not make a man a faithful husband, nor a woman a good wife; in other words, will not fit the person even for *this* life.

It is *plain* then, that the public schools neglect *entirely* one side of the child's nature and the principal side, since unless a child's conscience and heart be educated, it were better that it should not be educated at all. Let a man's mind be educated ever so

well, if he be *irreligious*, society has a rascal and a scamp to deal with, whom it would be much better off without. But educate the hearts and consciences of our infidels, athiests, anarchists, socialists, even of our criminals and you will make of them ideal Christian men.

The world, I admit, stands in need of intellectual men, but far more in need of honest men, pure men, faithful men, and the public schools do not even *pretend* to turn out such. One thing is therefore plain, namely, that the public schools *do not impart all that education implies*; that they only educate *one faculty* of the soul—the mind.

We are still granting them too much, for they do not even educate the child's *mind* in what is most important, or rather in what is absolutely necessary for the child to know. *Truth* is the object of the mind. The truths of *faith* are the *highest truths*, the most important truths, but the child is not taught them. Not one word is taught about God, though He is the beginning and end of *all* knowledge. Not a word is taught the child about its origin, its duties here, its destiny. A knowledge of God's laws, of the



child's duties to God, is necessary as a condition for their observance, and their observance is necessary as a condition for salvation, but the child learns nothing of them in the public schools.

*Patrons of the Public School* will answer us in this manner: We turn the child over to the *Sunday School* for a knowledge of God, of the truths of faith, of its duties as a Christian, etc., and we also let the whole *moral* side to the Church. *Let me reply* that they thus acknowledge what we are proving, that the public schools *do not* educate *fully*. But now let us see whether the *Sunday School* can make up the deficiency.

*First of all*, as stated above, experience testifies too plainly that with all the churches and Sunday schools in the land, the majority of our citizens know and care little about God, about law, about honesty, about purity, about morality in general.

*Secondly*, the parents of two-thirds of the children in the United States are not active members of any church; will they take a deep interest in seeing that their children get the proper *moral* training? That so many parents are not church members, is due

to the fact they were not *properly* educated when young.

*Thirdly, even if all* children attended Sunday school, would it be *just* to give *sixty* times as much attention to the mind as to the moral side of the child? To spend thirty (30) hours a week imparting secular knowledge and to set aside only one-half hour a week for religious knowledge? This would prove that public school patrons do not set a high value on the child's moral training, which is, in reality, immeasurably more important than secular knowledge.

### III.

It is now in order to determine whether the *Parochial School* educates *fully and properly*. Listen a moment and decide for yourself. Education, in its full sense, as we have seen, means to fit the child for *this* life and for the life *hereafter*. The public schools make no pretention to do more than to fit the child for the *business* part of *this* life. This is not enough for one who understands the relative importance of things—so we Catholics turn to the public schools and say: "That child is not *half* educated even for *this* life,

and you have taken no account whatever of the *next* life for which it must also be fitted; don't you know that the welfare of society depends much more on that child's character than on its intellectual training?" The public school answers: we know it, but we can only give the one side of education. Then the Catholic Church turns to her own and says: Parents! it is *important* that your child become a learned citizen, but it is *more important* that it become a good citizen, a pure, an honest citizen, and it is *absolutely necessary* that it be taught about its Maker, its duties to Him, for only thus can it be fitted for eternity; and because the public school does not teach it the eternal truths and does not even aim to make it a good citizen, "suffer your little children to come unto Me," I shall educate their minds *fully*, and shall also educate their hearts and consciences. I shall instruct them in the things of this life, and in the things of the life to come. I shall impart all the secular knowledge that they can get elsewhere, and I shall besides teach them their duties to God, their duties to you, and their duties to their fellow men. I shall also train their hearts to love God, to love and respect you and all

others. I shall impress them with a sense of right and wrong, train their consciences to fear God, to respect the rights of others and pursue good. I shall place over them as teachers men or women, whose very *dress* will remind them that there are higher things to live for than the material; men or women, inspired by holy motives, who at the altar of God have dedicated their lives to "instruct others unto justice." Even with the child's secular studies I shall intermingle an element of devotion and religion. And after I have had your child under such salutary influence, if it does not turn out a good man or good woman, if it does not become a good citizen of society and a faithful member of God's Church, it is either because it has poor example at home, or because it is acted upon by evil influences of the world or because it abuses God's graces.

Does not the *Catholic way* of educating appeal to you as immeasurably better and more complete than any other way? Dealing with every side of the child's nature, the parochial school educates properly and fully. I don't mean to hint that every product of the public school will turn out bad, but I do contend that

men and women who attended the public school and who are now esteemed members of society, owe their good character *not* to the *public schools*, but to good home training, or to other salutary influences.

I might have gone further and shown that the Catholic Church alone has the *right* to educate. St. Paul says so: "How can one teach unless he be sent?" And Christ sent *only the Church*. The Catholic Church *alone* has the *full* truth of God and hence she alone *can* teach it correctly. Moreover the Church *must* teach, for God *has* entrusted to her the eternal interests of man; she *must* teach, because Christ gave her that commission: "Teach all nations and I shall be with you."

#### IV.

Many Catholics have a *wrong* notion of the real purpose of the parochial school. They suppose that we build and maintain our own schools merely that we might teach the children *catechism* every day. No, their purpose is rather to lay *a solid religious foundation* to the faith of our future fathers and mothers. The principles of faith must be impressed

on the minds and hearts of the children; their *early daily* actions must be regulated by the eternal truths, that later, they may "live by faith."

To live aright, people must not only know but *realize* the truths of religion, and this is only rendered possible when the children are deeply impressed with them. The early years of the child being spent in the very shadow of the church, with teachers whose example and exhortations spur them on to good, the child can hardly fail to get wholesome impressions which will last. Moreover, they learn to be reverent in church, how to assist at Mass, how to pray devoutly, their faults are corrected and they get a better preparation for their first Holy Communion.

Years ago the parochial school was not so much of a necessity. There were not so many attractions and evil influences for the child, and parents were for the most part more strict with their children. Today with the cheap novels, newspapers, and free libraries, people read more and read so much against God and the Church that our children must needs have a clear knowledge of and be deeply impressed by the truths of faith, or they will be led astray. If we expect good

Catholics of the fathers and mothers of tomorrow, we must lay solid faith in the boys and girls of today.

“This is eternal life that they may know Thee and whom Thou hast sent, Jesus Christ.” The knowledge of God, says Christ, is eternal life, yet this true knowledge cannot be obtained in any but the parochial school. And listen to what the Holy Ghost says: “Cursing, lying, infidelity, and adultery abound, because there is no knowledge of God in the land.” Isn’t it then the plain duty of God’s Church to put knowledge of God in the land?

Yes, the parochial school aims to fit for this life and for the next life, and in doing so it educates in the fullest sense of the word

## Mixed Marriages.

It is not my purpose to scold those Catholics who *have* already cast their lot with a Protestant or an infidel, for except in very few instances, they secretly concede that it was the mistake of their lives. Many Catholics, who *before* marriage could see no wrong in the step *in their case*, have told me that they would never do it over.

And as to the *unmarried*, I shall not write them a sermon, for they have a real horror for sermons on mixed-marriages, and on account of this horror, they seldom give an attentive ear to the reasons for the Church's strict position regarding such marriages. My purpose then, will be merely to *enumerate* some of these reasons in a manner plain and convincing to everyone who will use his "thinking powers" a little.

1. First of all let me say that it is *God Himself* who will not tolerate mixed-marriages and the Church merely explains and enforces His will. Even in the Old Testament, mention of God's prohibition of mixed-marriages is so frequent that it would oc-



cupy too much space to quote all passages. I shall mention only a few:

"Thou shalt not take of their daughters (unbelievers) a wife for thy son."—Exod. xxxiv 16.

"If you will embrace the errors of those nations and make *marriages* with them, know you for a *certainty*, that they shall be a *pit* and a *snare* in thy way."—Joshua xxiii 12.

"You have transgressed, (done something forbidden). taking *strange wives* to add to the *sin* of Israel."—1 Esdras x 10."

"We have *sinned* against our God and have taken strange wives."—1 Esdras x, 2. Read the whole chapter x, of the First Book of Esdras to see how mixed marriages were viewed by faithful Jews.

2. If God Himself forbade such mixed-alliances in the Old Law, when marriage was only a natural contract, how much more reason is there for such prohibition *now*, that Christ has raised this contract to the rank of things most holy? For Christians marriage is now a sacrament, representing and effecting a holy union and *intended to sanctify* those who enter it. It can only be such a holy union where *faith*

*marries faith*, where both parties are under the dominion of God's Church.

3. No law is more reasonable and *charitable* than the law forbidding mixed-marriages. We are on earth to work for Heaven; that is sure. And most people must do that work as husbands and wives, as fathers and mothers, in other words, *in the marriage state*. Wherefore their marriage should put no obstacle in the way; it should rather help them. But when a Catholic marries a Protestant, he does put an obstacle in the way. If I want God's *blessing* on my married life, I must not break His law whilst entering it; I should rather endeavor *to have God present at the marriage ceremony*. He is not present at a mixed-marriage, for He forbids such. God cannot be inconsistent.

4. In marriage, husband and wife become one moral person. They must endeavor to sanctify each other. This cannot be done in a mixed-marriage, for how can there be harmonious co-operation towards salvation? They cannot even speak and think alike about their duties to God. A mixed-marriage makes a "house divided against itself." In marriage

man must have a "*helpmate like unto himself*" especially in religion, since thereby he strives to bring about the 'one thing necessary.'

5. When a man and woman enter marriage, they must be ready to become father and mother. Then on the Catholic devolves the very strict duty of bringing up the children faithful members of the Catholic Church. Need I tell you that this is *rarely* accomplished where one party is a Protestant? I say *rarely* for I admit that some *few* instances might be referred to.

Statistics will show better than any argument what good Catholics the off-spring of mixed-marriages become. The "Literary Digest" of a year ago quoted statistics gleaned from a house to house canvas, as follows: Where both father and mother were Catholic, ninety-two per cent. of the grown-up children are Catholics, but in mixed-marriages only thirty-four per cent. of the children go to church at all. That means that two-thirds of the children of mixed-marriages are lost to God's Church, and I might say, lost to Heaven.

*Can you believe, that God will bless such unions*

when they tend to pull down rather than build up His Kingdom. "Thy Kingdom come," (increase) is what we pray for. God's Kingdom would diminish fast, as statistics show, did the Church permit mixed-marriages.

6. Where husband and wife differ in religion, the child must generally be trained *in doubt*, not in faith. The child can hardly bring itself to believe that membership in the Catholic Church is so necessary, if one of its parents be not a member.

7. What if the Catholic party should die whilst the children are still young? The Protestant party must now see that the children be instructed in the Catholic faith, that they attend to their religious duties, etc. Even if the Protestant party do this, the children will take little interest when the surviving parent does not practice what he or she preaches and inculcates.

8. The non-Catholic party in a mixed marriage *either is opposed to the Catholic religion, or he is indifferent about all religion, or he is disposed toward the Catholic religion.* Now, if he be *opposed* to the true religion, he is surely not pleasing to God; if he

be *indifferent* about all religion he is not pleasing to God; if he be *disposed* toward the Catholic religion, as long as he defers entering the Church, he is not pleasing to God. So where is there *any mixed-marriage* that pleases God?

9. The *plainest* reason for God's and consequently the Church's prohibition of mixed-marriages is that God wants marriage entered into from holy, pure, *supernatural* motives. You are *not* actuated by *such motives* when you marry one not of the faith. Your reason for marrying a Protestant is, say his good looks, his means, or even his pleasing, kind disposition; it may be he is 'just according to your taste.' What does God care for all this, if his soul is not right? if his mind will not accept the truth and his will be not disposed to keep God's laws?

God wants *faith* to marry *faith*, *grace* to marry *grace*. Grace is *everything* with God. If the beauty of God's image, by grace, be not on the soul, all the other good habits, fine qualities of that person taken together will not satisfy God. Now in *mixed-marriages* grace *seldom* marries grace; for if the non-Catholic be *not* baptized he is not in grace; even if he be baptized he is most *probably* not in grace.

10. Of course, many Catholics who might be keeping company with non-Catholics believe that in *their* case things will go alright after marriage. I speak for their best interests when I say: *be careful*; do not deceive yourselves. Others have thought the same thing but have become sadly disappointed. Remember that our lives will be happy or unhappy precisely *as God* wants them to be; and remember, too, that the devil is also very much interested in your marriage. You may later have to confess: "The serpent deceived me."

But do not *converts* often result from mixed-marriages? Not half as frequently as apostates. The non-Catholic should become a convert *before* marriage and take plenty of time, too, to acquaint himself with the teachings and practices of the Church he enters.

## The Catholic Marriage.

### I.

It has always been the teaching of theologians that when God *calls* a person to *any* state of life, He is ready so to dispose and arrange things that they will work together unto that person's good unless the person himself by want of caution make himself unworthy of such a favor.

Now matrimony is such a state of life; hence if God has called *you* thereto, He will lead the way to a *happy* marriage for you providing you will let Him have more to do with it. He will direct the choice and see that you get the right partner, if you pray to Him for this and by a careful life dispose yourself for this favor from God. The seriousness of the step from which one cannot recede, and the hundreds of thousands of unhappy homes in our own country ought to make the young more careful about picking on a partner for life. But many young people are so blinded by inclination and passion that they do not see danger ahead. They forget that just as the call

to the marriage state comes from God so upon Him must they rely for all that will make their marriage happy, which includes, of course, the sending of the right partner.

By reckless company-keeping, etc., these youth turn God against them; then the devil has *his way*. He is shrewd, and having experimented with the young for centuries, knows by what bait they are best drawn into an unhappy marriage. Such is the teaching of the Holy Ghost Himself, as we read in the book of Tobias vi. 17: "*For they who in such manner receive matrimony as to shut out God from their mind, over them the devil has power.*"

In advising young Catholics then, who feel themselves called to the marriage state, I would call their attention to another utterance of an inspired writer: "*we are the children of saints, and we must not be joined together like heathens who know not God.*" Tob. VIII. 5. I would remind them that "*a good wife shall be given in the portion of them that fear God, to a man for his good works.*" Eccclus. xxxi. 3; and that "*a prudent wife is properly from the Lord.*" Prob. xix. 14. To make sure that *your* partner will be "from the



Lord" I would ask you to pray and consult your pastor (and parents) just as you would do in case you felt a call to the religious life; then do not pick on those who are *evidently not* "from the Lord," but from the devil, such as an enemy of your religion, a person of bad habits, etc. "Above all things *pray* to the Most High, that He may *direct thy way* in truth." Eccus. xxxvii, 19. "My son do *nothing without counsel*, and thou shalt not repent when thou hast done." Eccius. xxxii, 24.

## II.

Just as the *ceremony* at a *mixed marriage* is the simplest and *the coldest* that the priest ever officiates at, so the ceremony by which two good Catholics are united for life is one of the most *solemn* in the Church's ritual. The Catholic marriage, in the words of St. Paul, is '*a great sacrament*,' and hence the ceremony is performed in the *church*. Moreover as the marriage state is one of the three states of life to which the parties are *called by God*, and in which they are to serve God together till death—like the reception into the religious life, marriage is entered into *before the very altar*.

Instead of being "joined together as the heathen who know not God," (Tob. viii. 5,) before two good Catholics speak the word which makes them *one*, they by a good confession, remove from their souls everything that might prevent God's presence at the ceremony, and by putting themselves in the state of grace they dispose themselves for God's blessing on their wedded life. *Now* God looks down upon them with the same loving eye as when the cleansing waters of baptism made them His adopted children. He sees the light of faith and the beauty of His own image resplendent on their souls. As their hearts become one, so does grace marry grace and faith marry faith.

No sooner are they united in marriage than the holy sacrifice of the Mass is offered for them with special prayers for God's blessing and protection on their lives and for His powerful help to enable them to perform their new duties well. The Church even allows an interruption at this mass which is not permitted to the priest at any other time. During the principal part of the sacrifice, whilst Christ is personally present on the altar the priest leaves off the mass,

invites the newly-married couple to approach the altar, and then turning to Christ, the priest asks Him again to grant them a long life, a happy life, a life so blessed and replete with good works that it will be a sure way to the Heavenly Banquet. A few moments later the Son of God becomes their first food that morning and thus unites Himself more closely to them than they are united to each other.

Could God's blessing be withheld from a marriage thus prepared for and thus entered into? Isn't there an unspeakable difference between the cold, sad, mixed-marriage and the solemn joyful Catholic marriage?

Are you now surprised that the Church inveighs so strongly against mixed-alliances?

After such reflections will any who read this enter into marriage without prayer, without a fit preparation? Will they allow themselves to be led into an unhappy marriage by an enemy of their religion, by a person of bad habits, etc? How could they do so, with these terrible words uttered by the Holy Ghost ringing in their ears? "They who in such manner receive marriage, as to shut out God from their mind, over them the *devil* has power."—Tob. vi. 17.

## To the Non-Catholic in a Mixed-Marriage.

### I

What has been said in the chapter on Mixed-Marriages is said with all respect to you. My purpose was not to offend, but to give to the Catholic plain reasons for God's disapproval of mixed marriages. If you will kindly reflect but a moment, you will admit that God cares more for your soul than for your body; and hence in marriage, He is more concerned about the union of your souls than the union of your bodies. You and your partner are working *together* for the things of *this* life; God wants you to work together for the things of HEAVEN; but can you work together thus when you do not believe alike?

I do not blame you for not having accepted your partner's faith, if you never believed that he or she had the truth; but will you kindly listen to a few facts from which you might ascertain whether either of you has the true faith and who? Most surely you are willing to listen to argument, for every reasonable person is. No one on this earth is so deserving

of respect as the man or woman who is sincere, earnest, who wants to know and to do what is right.

## II.

What is your belief? Your partner is a Catholic. If you differ from him or her, then *both of you cannot* be right; *one of you* surely has *not* the truth. Do you profess any religion? If not, I am going to ask you a question:

Do you believe in the Divinity of Christ? That is, do you believe that Christ was really God? That the Christ, whom we revere as God, *lived on earth* 1900 years ago can be proved more plainly than any other fact of history, for not only one, but *many* historians of *His own time* speak of Him. But was He God? His enemies try to prove that He was not, but the harder their attempt, the more clearly do they convince the people that He *was* God.

They grant that He was everything short of God; that He was a model of perfection; the holiest person that ever lived, etc. Take them at their own words now: Would He have been a model of perfection if His whole public life had been spent in deceiving

the people? Would he have been the holiest person that ever lived, if he was guilty of blasphemy, the greatest falsehood, etc? But *if* He was *not* God, then He *was* a deceiver, a blasphemer, a false teacher; for His every act and most of His teaching were directed to impress on the world the belief that He was God. Now his worst enemies have too much respect for Christ to charge Him with deception, blasphemy, falsehood. If He was not such a wicked person, then He was what He so emphatically professed to be—God. But His different miracles, and especially His Resurrection, in support of which there could not be stronger evidence asked; His whole teaching, the effects of His teaching, etc., all prove most conclusively that Christ was the very “Son of the living God.”

### III

But what was God doing *on earth* in human form? One great purpose was to *enlighten* the world in matters of tremendous importance. During the 4,000 years previous to His appearance on earth, only one people knew anything about what is of the greatest

importance for man to know. People knew nothing certain of their origin, their purpose on earth, nor of their destiny. They paid God no true worship, or rather, they worshipped things that were not God at all. Christ taught the world *much* about God; that God made us for Himself; that our purpose on earth is to honor, love and serve this God according to His requirements; and that as a reward, we should be made eternally happy in Heaven.

*In order to have uniformity of belief and worship, Christ instituted a Church which he strictly requires all to become members of as a condition for attaining Heaven.*

If Christ was God and requires this, then we are *not free* to join this Church or not. Heaven belongs to God, and if He wants you in His Church as a condition for attaining Heaven, then you cannot expect Heaven otherwise. You cannot vote unless you are a citizen of the United States; you cannot be elected to the Presidency, no matter how well qualified, unless you were born in this country. If such are the requirements laid down by the constitution, they must be complied with. In like manner, if God

makes Heaven dependent on membership in His Church, then *His* demands must be complied with.

#### IV

Listen to the conversation I would hold with you, if you were already a member of some church, but not of the Catholic Church.

If you told me that you were a member of a Protestant church, I would naturally ask: of which one? for there are four or five hundred of them.

If you answered: of the Methodist Church, I would again ask: of which branch? for it has seventeen branches.

If you answered: "I am a Lutheran," I would again ask: Do you belong to the Missouri synod? or to the Reformed Lutheran? or to the Evangelical Lutheran? or to one of the other nineteen bodies, and to which?

If you told me that you were an Episcopalian, I would be compelled to ask the same question: Do you belong to the High or Low or Broad Church?

If you replied that you were a Presbyterian, I would again want to know to which of the twelve branches you belong.



As each one of these denominations consists of many branches, one differing from the other, it would be pretty hard to decide whether you or a member of one of the other branches, professed the exact teaching of the founder, whether of Methodism, Episcopalianism, Lutheranism, etc.

After learning what church you are a member of, I would ask: Could you *prove* to me that that church is *the* Church which Christ established? for Christ certainly did not establish all of the hundreds of contradictory sects. He founded *A* Church and wants everybody to belong to *It*, not to some other. He calls His Church *My* Church, *The* Church. If you don't happen to belong to that one, then you belong to somebody else's Church besides God's.

## V

Now, can the *one true* Church be distinguished from the rest? Here are some incontrovertible facts which will greatly assist us in discovering the true Church of Christ:

Four hundred years ago there was only *one* Church, and that Church dates back 1500 years farther,—to

*Christ's time* and *that Church is today* stronger in membership than all the other 400 or 500 sects together; *that Church* is spread all over the world, yet not split up into branches, but wonderfully united in belief and practice. *That Church* happens to be the Catholic Church. Are these not strong points in favor of the Catholic Church being the Church of Christ?

Here are some more undeniable facts: No Protestant denomination is over 400 years old, whereas Christ's Church *must be* 1900 years old. This fact alone excludes all the Protestant sects. Moreover history mentions the names of the *men* who started the Protestant denominations.

Protestants knowing this, answer us: We are aware that the Catholic Church is the *oldest Church*; we know too that she was *once* the *true Church*, but she fell into gross errors a few centuries ago; therefore *today* she is *not the true Church*.

Now, my friend, I hope you are sincere, so reflect a moment; you have been imposed upon. If the Catholic Church has no longer the truth, then 499 out of the 500 Protestant sects have not the truth either, for they all differ, and truth is *one*; the probability then

would be that you don't belong to the right Protestant sect either.

But now, could the true Church fall into error? Remember that Christ, *who was God*, established the Catholic Church; history admits this. Would a wise and omnipotent God allow the Church, which He established for all times, to fall into error when He could prevent it? St. Paul asks husbands to love their wives as Christ loved His Church and died for her. But would Christ have entertained deep love for His Church if He permitted her to leave Him, or if He left her?

No, my friend, *once* the true Church, *always* the true Church. Christ even promised that this would be so; that *He* would remain with His Church *till the end of time*; that He would send the Holy Ghost, the *Spirit of truth*, to keep her in truth; that hell would not gain a victory over her. St. Paul vouches for the Church's stability in truth when he calls her the *pillar and ground of Truth*.

I must be more brief; so here are a few points to reflect upon:

In the Apostles' creed, the oldest of all creeds we read,—I believe in the holy *Catholic Church*.

The 10,000,000 martyrs of the first three centuries died cruel deaths rather than abandon the truth of the *Catholic Church*.

Do you know of an earnest, well instructed convert to the Catholic faith, who ever regretted that he became a Catholic?

Did you ever hear of a Catholic becoming a Protestant on his death bed for safety sake?

Every day Protestants become Catholics on their death bed for safety sake.

Instead of the Catholic Church, rather the Protestant denominations are *changing*. Presbyterians have discussed changing their creed for the last two years. Imagine the *Baptists* dropping *baptism*, but they have considered that. No Protestant denomination is the same as when founded; the different branches show that. Wesley, for example, did not found seventeen branches of the Methodist Church.

Other churches are adopting Catholic practices more and more.

If the Catholic Church is not the true Church, then *none* is, for all others are based on the Bible, which the Catholic Church gave them, and which *she* de-

clared inspired. If the Catholic Church had not been God's infallible Church at that time, then no Protestant denomination knows whether the Bible contains God's word at all or not.

By accepting the Bible as inspired they practically admit the Catholic Church's infallibility, that is, they admit that she *could not* teach error; then she never did; then she is the true Church today; then Protestantism has no excuse for its existence; then the so-called Reformation was rather a Deformation, if it changed the creed of God's Church.

When Protestants charge the Catholic Church with having invented new doctrines, or with having discarded old ones, how is it that they can never say "when?" New *definitions* by Councils are not *new doctrines*.

Objections:

Why are so many Catholics *bad* if their Church be *the* Church?

Ans.—Because they do not *live up* to their Church.

Why do so many Catholics *leave* the Church if to belong to it be such a privilege?

Ans.—Because, on account of not living in accord-

ance with the *requirements* of the Church, God allows them to *lose* their faith as a punishment, and a severe punishment it is.

Why is the Church persecuted even in Catholic countries?

Ans.—Because where God has a strong hold on the people, the devils fight hardest. Why, my friend, the very best proof of the Catholic Church being God's Church is that she is persecuted. Christ says so: "They have persecuted Me; they will persecute you too."

But it is a hard step for many Protestants to become Catholics.

Ans.—Undoubtedly, but Heaven is surely worth it. Remember that "the Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence." Be careful, you are looking more for your comfort than to please God.

But one hates to leave the Church he was raised in.

Ans.—Now, don't be guided by *feeling*, but by conscience and reason.

But I don't believe in confession.

Ans.—Your partner does; 300,000,000 others do; the priest himself goes to confession. It is not half

as hard as you imagine; you will feel a hundred per cent better after *your* first confession; you will then believe in it, and like other converts you will want to go often.

I am not explaining Catholic doctrine in this little book; but examine the different truths in some Catholic book that does explain them and you will believe them all, if you are in earnest and pray for a little light.

Would that people cared more for the religion that pleases God than for one that pleases themselves. We cannot expect Heaven through the latter kind.

Now, my friend, when I tell you that it is necessary to join *the* Church of God, I am *not making* a law; I am simply in all kindness reminding you of a *duty*, that *Christ Himself* imposes upon *all*. Read over again this chapter carefully and earnestly, and see if it is not pretty plain that your partner, whether good or bad, has the true faith. The fact that there are bad Catholics will not excuse you from becoming a Catholic as soon as you are convinced that God requires it.

Really would it not be *nicer* also if you and your

spouse were members of the *same* Church, rearing the children in strong faith, and *working together* for the "one thing necessary?" Convince yourself that a *moral* life alone will not lead to Heaven; we must *"live by faith."* Even your good works are worth nothing to God, if you refuse to do His will in *His greatest demand*—join His Church. "Without faith (the true faith of course) it is impossible to please God."

Even though you see clearly the truth of the Catholic Religion, you must pray for the *gift of faith*. Faith is a gift of God. Kindly ask for it in a short prayer of your own every day. Say with St. Paul: "Lord what wilt Thou have me to do;" and be cheered up by these words of Christ: "He who will confess (acknowledge) Me before men, him I shall confess before My Father Who is in Heaven."



## To The Fallen-Away Catholic.

1. My good friend, I would ask you to be serious, just for a few moments, and to listen to one who has your best interests at heart. Tell me why you have left off going to church.

You certainly have not ceased to believe in the existence of God; for that would mean you have begun to believe the greatest absurdity; namely, that the sun, moon and stars, the earth, the seas and the first living creatures *made themselves*. If these things did not make themselves, then an Almighty Being made them. . We call that Being, God. Isn't it rather that you *wish* there were no God, so that there would be no *hell* and no *judgment*? But this *wish* will *not change* the state of things any more than the murderer's wish that there were no penitentiary, will do away with such a place of punishment.

2. Or have you begun to *doubt* the Divinity of Christ? Read the preceding chapter over and convince yourself that Christ was truly God and that living up to the Church He established is the *only way* to *Heaven* for you.

3. Or have you put yourself out of the Church by an unlawful or invalid *marriage*? In so doing you made a tremendous blunder, but that mistake can be corrected. And I request you not to defer its correction long; go to see your parish priest at once.

4. Have you put yourself out of the Church by joining SOCIETIES FORBIDDEN BY THE CHURCH? Then again, I would say that if you cannot belong to both the society *and* the Church, *good sense* will dictate that you give up the society. For even if *you* see no reason for that society's condemnation, you must at least grant that it cannot lead you to Heaven; that it is a *human* organization.

To choose a human organization in preference to the divine one instituted by Christ, is an awful *insult to God*. Moreover, you can take for granted that the Church's condemnation is based on solid reasons, though you might not clearly comprehend these reasons. The chaplain and bible which all secret societies have, show that *religion* enters into them, and the fact that that bible is *not* the one *approved* by the Church, and that chaplain is not commissioned by God, makes the religion of these societies heretical.

Hence the Church can no more permit you to belong to such societies (with a religion different from her own) than she can allow you to join a Protestant church.

If these societies merely had a tendency to make people take less interest in their Church, that reason would be enough for prohibiting Catholics from joining them. And that this tendency exists, I know. Even Protestant ministers, who often become members of secret societies for policy sake concede that persons who join them often give up active attendance at church, giving as a reason, that *they get religion enough in their lodge.*

Catholics who belong to these societies often refer to the religious features as reasons why the Church should approve of them rather than condemn them. If such were the case then the Church should approve of all other religions, for the preachers of such religions don't teach the people *evil*. Christ established *one* religion; that one and no other pleases God. "He who is not *with Me* is against Me," are Christ's own words.

5. Or have you just remained away from church through carelessness,—neglected Mass, Easter duty, etc? I beg of you for your own soul's sake to begin again at once to live up to your Church; you have deprived your soul of much good and have positively sinned; you are walking away from Heaven.

6. Or have you been addicted to some sin which you were unwilling to give up and therefore felt that it would do you no good to go to church? If so, my friend, come to your senses this day. The sin may be hard to give up, but it will be harder to go to hell; you are on the sure way thereto. If you care more to please your passions than to please God, you can not expect Heaven. About the past do not despair, for are not these words cheering: "On whatever day the sinner is converted (repents) his iniquities I shall not remember." But do not postpone this repentance, for God may refuse you the grace later.

7. Or have you quit Church because affairs of the congregation were not run rightly? Because of trouble you had with the priest? Because of some scandal that arose in the church? All these are no reasons why you should take revenge on your own

soul, nor why you should refuse to give to God the service He is so justly entitled to from you.

8. No, my friend, if all should follow your example, if all should refuse God what He so reasonably asks and what He is so willing to repay; if all should refuse to pay homage to God, especially on *His* day, (Sunday), I am sure, that God, receiving no honor and glory from His creatures, would put an end to things here below.

Do not relinquish your Church, for that would be denying Christ, and listen to what Christ says He will do to those who deny Him: "He that will deny Me before men, *him I shall deny* before my Father who is in Heaven." One who does not keep his promise is not very honorable. Remember what you promised through your sponsors in baptism, what you promised *yourself* in First Holy Communion and Confirmation. You promised *solemnly, in church* that you would ever be a *faithful* member of the Church,—even a *soldier* of Christ.

I certainly have the interests of God and your own best interests at heart, when I implore you to begin *at once* to live up to your Church again. Endeavor

to get some good out of the remainder of your life. No matter how long it has been since your last good confession, go this very month, the priest will assist you and I assure you that you will feel happy to be again on friendly terms with God.

All the reasons which you might adduce to justify yourself in staying away from church will not suffice; for as *Heaven is the one thing* we cannot afford to lose, so is the *way to Heaven* (the Church) the one thing we cannot dispense with. She is the *means to the end*.

## Sunday Observance.

### I.

*"Thou art worthy, O Lord, our God, to receive glory and honor; because Thou hast created all things."*—Apoc. ix, 11.

*"Come, let us adore and fall down before the Lord that made us; for He is the Lord our God; we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand."*—Ps. xcix, 7.

It is with a feeling of sadness that I must reprimand many Catholics for refusing to comply with a law, which they ought to obey so cheerfully.

It is indeed sad to think that man can become so forgetful of his real purpose on earth as not to see the reasonableness of giving himself up *entirely at least on one day of each week* to the service of God.

Considering that we are on earth *only* to serve God, and considering the eternal reward promised us in return for this service, we must admit that God asks *very little* of our time for His exclusive worship. Because He does ask so little, it seems that He designedly calls especial attention to His third commandment by prefacing it with the word "remember;" as much as to say: "I am requesting but *one day out of seven* for Myself but this day I want,—remember, that thou keep it holy."

I shall not enter into the reasons why the first instead of the seventh day of the week is dedicated to God in the New Law, for *substantially* the com-

mandment remains the same,—requiring man to rest from his work and to worship God *publicly* on one day of each week.

## II.

After establishing the *fact* that we are strictly *commanded* to keep the Sunday holy, the next thing to make clear is the precise *manner*, in which God must be worshipped on this day. And it will be *plain* to any thinking mind that God must be honored differently from others. The honor we pay Him *must contain an acknowledgment* of our entire *dependence* on Him. We call such honor *sacrifice*. And because we do not owe *everything* to anyone else but God, we are *not* permitted to offer *sacrifice* to anyone but to Him.

The honor we pay to God, then, must be greater both in *quality* and in *quantity* than the honor shown to any other person.

As to *quality*, it must be *sacrifice*; and as to *quantity*, it must be the *highest* possible.

Even here on earth the dignity and character of the person are considered when it is a question of rendering homage. We show no marks of respect whatever to a *non-acquaintance*; we *greet* an acquaintance; we *shake hands* with a *friend*; we meet the *President* with committees, decorate public buildings in his honor and escort him through the streets amid music and cheers.



It honors should increase in quantity according to the dignity of the person, how is man to honor God adequately,—before whom kings are nothing? to whom he owes his very life and countless other blessings? *Sacrifice* must be the *quality* of worship; the *quantity* must be *infinite*,—because we owe an *infinite debt* to God. But how can man pay an *infinite debt*? He must first have a *gift* of *infinite value*. And this, thanks to God's goodness and love, the Catholic Church has.

In the

*Mass*

we have a sacrifice of *infinite value*—one that honors God *adequately*. I wish to make this plain, so give me your attention.

### III.

You *understand* well, that when Christ sacrificed *His life* on Calvary for the world's sins nineteen hundred years ago, God received an *infinite* worship from an infinite Person. It was the *first* time in the world's history that *due* honor was paid to the Almighty; but *since that day* God is *not* satisfied with any *inferior* sacrifice. His wisdom devised a means whereby *His only Son*, our beloved Savior, *would be* a "*priest forever*." "But *how*?" you might ask; "Christ died *once*, and so cruelly that once was surely enough;" "*moreover*, He went to Heaven

with *the body* which was immolated in Calvary's sacrifice." This is very true, yet I repeat that God's wisdom, prompted by boundless love, made it possible for Christ to offer *every day until the end of time*, the sacrifice of Calvary,—only not in the same manner. The *manner* does not count much. The *object* offered and the *Person* offering are what count, and they were always to be the same.

Here is what God's wisdom and love devised: At the last supper, the night before Calvary's bloody sacrifice, Christ began His priesthood "*according to the order of Melchisedech*,"—the kind of priesthood He was to exercise *forever*. By creative words He produced His living Person under another form; under the form of bread and wine. Then for God's perpetual honor and for the world's perpetual good He empowered His Apostles and their successors for all time to do the same thing. That is, He empowered them to produce His living Person on the altar of sacrifice, whenever they as His representatives and as ministers of the people would say over bread and wine the self-same words He used: "This is My body; this is my blood." This is what takes place in the *Mass*.

Now it will be plain to everyone, that if the living Christ in Heaven is rendered present on earth whenever Mass is offered,—no matter under what form,—

He can repeatedly sacrifice Himself to the Father to atone for the world's sins and to implore blessings upon immortal souls.

Is it not plain now, that *Christ* can be a "*priest forever?*" Is it not plain now that the *Mass* is a form of worship of the same value as the sacrifice of the cross,—since the same body and blood of Christ are immolated? And considering that *it*, and *it alone*, honors God adequately, are you surprised that the Catholic Church imposes on her people an obligation to be present at Mass at least once a week,—on Sunday—the day which we must keep holy?

## V.

No obligation imposed by God or man ought to be so cheerfully complied with, as the obligation to hear Mass on Sunday. In fact it should *not* be considered a duty, but a *privilege* to be present, and hence Catholics, instead of looking for *excuses* justifying their absence, ought rather to *surmount* great *difficulties* in order to offer to God this infinite gift to pay their infinite debt to Him.

*Even* if there were *no law* requiring people to attend Mass on Sunday, they ought to be eager to do this much in recognition of *favors received* during the week previous, and to implore *blessings* for the coming week.

*Last week* hundreds of thousands of people died, met with various accidents, and were visited with manifold afflictions; *you* were not included in the number. Is not this worth your recognition? *Next week* that many more will be visited similarly by God; could you better dispose God to exempt you again, than by going to Mass and offering Him His beloved Son for mercy?

It is really surprising what *excuses* many Catholics offer in justification of Mass-missing. Some will say: "I am not very well." This is often an *imaginary* excuse; let a physician first declare whether it will hurt you to take a little walk from home. Whom do you rely upon for improvement in your health? If you had faith, you would imitate those who ran to *Christ* and said: "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst cure me;" and where can you find Christ better disposed to help you than in the Mass?

"I am *old* now and not very strong."

Answer: You ought to be *eager* to get some *good* out of your few *remaining* days. You will not be able to assist at *many more* Masses,—so do not miss any more than you absolutely must.

"I live so far from church."

Answer: You would drive ten *miles* for ten *dollars*.

"There are always *some* of our family at Mass."

Answer: *All* ought to be there, if possible. *Each* member of the family owes adoration to God; *each* stands in need of help.

"I am *tired* after a week's hard work.

Answer: At Mass *Christ* offers a hard sacrifice for *you*; you must offer a little troublesome one for *Him*; the harder the work performed for God the greater the reward. You would not be too tired for an excursion or a fishing trip.

"I had company."

Answer: *God* comes *first*; take your company to church with you; should they be unwilling to go,—no excuse,—for you have a *standing invitation* to be *God's* company.

"I must *work* on Sunday morning."

Answer: I have asked the employer of several Catholics who offered this excuse and was told by him that he did not know the man *cared* to go to church—otherwise he should not have prevented him. Moreover you *must try* to find *different employment*, if it interferes regularly with the duties you owe to God.

"Why go to *Mass*, I can *pray* at home."

Answer: God wants *more than prayer* from you on Sunday; He wants you to worship Him *in public* and in the *manner* that He or *His Church* prescribes.

## VI.

Even if one should be *prevented* from attending Mass, he is *not* on that account *excused* from keeping *the day holy*. He must not do *unnecessary hard work*, must keep away from *persons* who spend the Sunday entertaining the devil; from *places* where there is no room for God.

He should, even after fulfilling the *morning obligation*, spend the remainder of the day in recollection and quiet; if possible in reading a Catholic paper or good book.

What we want to impress on our minds is this: That we have *no right* to *excuse ourselves* from observing a law. The *legislator* alone can excuse us. Imagine a man trying to excuse *himself* from paying his taxes. The *Sunday* belongs to *God*; we belong to Him; we must give to Him the things that are His. *He* alone can excuse us from a law that He makes. So the *Church* alone can excuse us from complying with a law which *she* makes. She *does* excuse us from attending Mass for several weighty reasons, but not for half of the reasons which people resort to.

I shall not dwell on the *self-evident* fact that Mass must be assisted at *with a view to profit* by it,—that is with earnest attention and devotion; nor on that *other* most important point—that where several masses are said regularly in a parish church, you

should arrange to attend as often as possible *that* Mass, at which the *word of God is preached*.

## VII.

I believe the world is much more *wicked* and corrupt *to-day* than it was at the time of the *deluge*, when Almighty God “destroyed all flesh” to put an end to sin.

And if the Almighty withholds a worse chastisement from the world now, it is because He receives *honor enough* to *offset* the wickedness,—*but only through the Mass*.

In the Old Law the sacrifices could not appease God *sufficiently*; in the New Law, His only Son is with the world to beg pardon for its wickedness. Christ is praying: “Father, forgive them.”

I have dwelt on this chapter longer than I really intended but it is because God’s honor and the welfare of so many readers require it. Have before your mind the *purpose of your existence* and the Sunday obligation becomes most *plain*.

Refuse to “give to God the things that are God’s” and He will refuse to give to you in eternity the things prepared for His faithful servants.

God is certainly “worthy to receive glory and honor, because He has created all things.”—(Apoc. ix, 11).

“Remember, thou keep *holy* the Sabbath Day.”

## Apothegms.

Only *Eternal* things are worthy the aspiration of an *immortal* being.

All that your dead hand will hold will be what you have given away.

It is strange that an inheritance, Klondike, or other attraction of earth should be more alluring to people than the prospect of Heaven.

There is no moral training in the development of the intellect. The world is beginning to realize that the majority of criminals inflicting humanity are educated.

When a man learned and religious steps into public life, society receives a jewel. To turn out men learned *and* religious is the aim of the Catholic school.

The would-be atheist is inclined to *believe in a God* when the thunders roar, when the lightning strikes, or when the earth quakes.



## KIND WORDS FROM YOUR PASTOR

People owe everything to God, yet usually pay their church-dues the very last chance. Is this proper recognition of God's Providence? When *God* made church-laws, as He did for the Jews, He required the *first* fruits of a man's labor.



"A will in which the Lord is not made one of the heirs is a bad will."—CARDINAL MANNING.



The atmosphere of the home cannot be kept Catholic without Catholic literature; yet how many families do not even subscribe for a Catholic paper or periodical, much less own a small Catholic library?



We don't realize how little we are needed in this world until we hear of the demise of great men, and see how well the world gets along without them.



The religion of some people has been compared to a wooden-leg. There is neither warmth nor life in it; although it helps them to hobble along, it never becomes a part of them, but has to be strapped on every morning.

## KIND WORDS FROM YOUR PASTOR

A person who does not benefit the world by his life, usually benefits it by his death; for one who lives to no purpose lives to a bad purpose.



Take hold of the *present* opportunities; use the *present* graces. Many people spend half their time anticipating tomorrow, and the other half in regretting yesterday.



Church dues, it may be, were smaller years ago, but remember that your little \$2,000 church was the best in your town. But now, when Protestants, whose congregations are seldom as large as ours, erect fine structures merely to meet and pray in, it would be an insult to God, if *we* did not make sacrifices to erect, if possible, better structures,—*for God to dwell in.*



Looking back on the years that have passed, how consoling it would be at the close of your life, to feel that you had lived not for passion, appetite and the empty pleasures of the world, but for your soul, for God, for the happiness of Heaven, which would soon be yours to enjoy with angels in that "Paradise of Delights.



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